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648 Historically, the modern aspect of role differentiation and political specialization began with the appointment of Mitkhatri 'Adam at Sidi Barrani, west of Marsa Matruh. This was under Muhammad 'Ali Pasha. The new role was that of 'umda, the same term used for the village leader in the Valley of the Nile. The first Bedouin 'umda died in 1909. At this time, under the British, another political role was instituted. This new role, that of shaikh, was a kind of vice-'umda position. The son of the first shaikh is now about 80 years old and still lives in Marsa Matruh. (He was my chief informant [115] for Bedouin history.) During this early period, there were few government officials in the desert, and, according to my informant, "there was need for only a few 'umdas and shaikhs. But later there was a need for more and more. The job of these men in those times was to work for the Egyptians in their dealings with the Bedouins of the desert." The number of incumbents in the offices of 'umda and shaikh increased as the political needs of the British grew.

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648 According to the Bedouins, the British administration did not arrive in the desert until about 1914. Up until that time, matters were in the hands of the Egyptians who governed the desert province for the colonial government. When the British arrived in Marsa Matruh, the opening of World War I was at hand. The Bedouins say, quite proudly, that the British knew of their sympathy for, and cooperation with, the Sanusi against the Italians in Cyrenaica.

1: Obermeyer E-5 (1964-1965) 1969 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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size in the barley and pasture area of al-Qasr would not permit a subsistence level economy. Just as important is the political implication of any attempt at large-scale land reform in al-Qasr. The pattern of land distribution in al-Qasr reflects an intimate relationship between the structural principles of Bedouin society, especially the lineage system and territoriality. (In a later chapter we will discuss this relationship.) The ramifications of land reform would amount to a structural rearrangement of al-Qasr society and would make redistribution of land difficult to administer, or even to imagine. A reorganization of property relations is, in effect, a basic change in the authority structure. Therefore, the Bedouins want no part of land reform. There is a law which forbids the ownership of "more than 100 feddans (one feddan=one acre) of agricultural land. This shall also apply to barren and desert land."[1] One of my informants, a large landowner, claims that this "law only applies to the Nile Valley where there is plenty of water. If the government wants the Bedouins to abide by that law then they must take care of us. I would gladly trade this land (which was considerably more than 100 feddans) for 100 feddans in the Nile Valley." The traditional tribal structure of Bedouin society

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[1] "Decree for the Amendment of the Agrarian Reform Law in the Southern Region," Department of Information, Cairo, July 25, 1961.

613 682 683 672 558 the victims' families sent their representatives to demand that the money be paid. To face the situation, a meeting of all the Awaqil of Eilat Aggary was called and Sheikh Selouma, the Aqila of bait Eweidha, took the responsibility of notifying the other Awaqil. The meeting was held in [15] the tent of Hemeida (my driver and informant) from the Sanagrah tribe. Each bait was represented by its Aqila with the exception of bait Asabei', from which both Shei'eb and Hakim were present. Since bait Asabei' was the only bait which did not submit to its share of the bloodmoney, the discussion centered around the inability of Shei'eb to collect it. In a gesture which he meant to appear as helping out Shei'eb, Hakim offered to pay not only his share but that of all members of bait Asabei', and followed his offer by handing the money to Sheikh Selouma. After this act which was a complete surprise to Shei'eb, Sheikh Slouma, the Aqila of bait Eweidha, suggested that Hakim should be considered as the Aqila of bait Asabei' instead of Shei'eb, who had demonstrated his inability to collect from members of his own bait. He emphasized the fact that he had nothing against Shei'eb who had legitimately acquired his position as Aqila by means of succession. But he insisted that the survival of the Amar depended upon the fulfullment of its financial obligations to outsiders and that Hakim was wealthy and could pay. Shei'eb did not comment and the rest of the Awaqil nodded indicating their agreement with Sheikh Selouma.

[124] The above is the summary of events that happened before I came to the area, and which were told to me by informants including the parties involved. Since most of these events occurred more than ten years ago,